VILIFICATION OF A PROPHET AND THE DEATH PENALTY

A NABI IS SENT BY ALLAAH TA`ALA

This belief i.e. that the Ambiya (alaihimus salaam) are the chosen servants of Allaah Ta`ala, is from those beliefs of which its refutation brings one to the state of Kufr (disbelief). All prophets (alaihimus salaam) are specially chosen and sent by Allaah Ta`ala and none can become a Nabi by endeavour of his own efforts or spiritual exercises or feats. In fact the Ulama have written that any person who believes that any Nabi was made a Nabi owing to his own efforts or spiritual feats, or that persons speech indicates to such a belief then such a person falls out of the pale of Islaam.

"That person who holds this belief that prophet-hood can be attained by ones own efforts or spiritual excellence, is a Kaafir. This type of belief would lead to a surmisation that there still remains a possibility of a prophet coming after Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam). And because of this type of belief, that a prophet can be self-made would also allow the possibility of criticising and speaking ill of the prophet. All this is Kufr." (Al-Fiqh ala Mazahibil Arb`a page 423, vol.5)

Allaah Ta`ala has also mentioned in the Qur`aan Shareef on numerous occasions regarding the Ambiya (alaihimus salaam) :

"Surely Allaah Ta`ala has chosen Aadam, Nooh, the family of Ebrahim and the family of Imraan above the entire creation. Offsprings, one of the other. And Allaah Ta`ala is the All-Hearing and All-Seeing." (Surah Aale Imraan 33.34)

"O Nabi, surely WE have sent you as a witness, a bearer of spiritual sun glad tidings, and a Warner, - and as an inviter towards Allaah Ta`ala, with HIS consent, and as a spreading light."(Surah Ahzaab 45,46)

"And (Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)) does not speak of his own desire, it is only an inspiration which is inspired." (Surah Najm)

DIFFERENCE IN RANKS

This discussion is general regarding all the Ambiya (alaihimus salaam) and the crux of the matter is that in so far as the state of prophet-hood (as discussed above) is concerned, a Nabi and Rasool are equal (i.e. they are all specially chosen by Allaah Ta`ala). However regarding the stages of prophet-hood, Divine revelations and some prophets coming with a new Shariah – here there are most definitely stages of excellence. The Qur`aan Shareef has also made this clear :
"These prophets, We have favoured some above the others." (Surah Baqarah)
Our Nabi Muhammad (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) holds the most supreme position over all the other prophets. His status is the highest over all the others. This is evidently clear from the Qur`aan Shareef and Ahaadith, hence there is no need for any further proof. Hereunder we will list a few of the testifications (regarding Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)'s excellence), for the appeasement of the hearts.

It has been reported from Hadhrat Abu Saeed Khudri (radhiAllaahu anhu) that Rasullullaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said : *"I will be the leader from amongst the children of Aadam on the day of Qiyamat and I am not saying it out of pride, in my hands I will yield the flag of praise and here too I am not being boastful. All the prophets from Aadam (alaihimus salaam) will be beneath my flag and I will be the first to be resurrected on the day of Qiyaamah, however I am not saying this out of pride."*(Mishkaat from Tirmidhi page 514)

"I am the most beloved and honoured to Allaah Ta`ala from all the creation, past and present." (Mishkaat page 514)

"I am the leader of all the prophets, and I am not saying it out of pride. I am the seal of all the prophets and here too I am not saying it out of pride. I will be the first to intercede (on the day of Qiyaamah) and the first whose intercession will be accepted, and I am not saying this out of pride."
(Mishkaat from Daarmi page 514)

THE EXCELLENCE OF A NABI

This much is very clear that a Nabi of any era is far more supreme than any human being. Their character, qualities and actions are all from Allaah Ta`ala and they are of a very high level, which is beyond the imagination of any human. Now, what can be said of the best and the seal of all prophets, Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam), whose honesty, integrity, character and actions were such that even his enemies could not help but acknowledge that these are from a Divine being. It is as evident as clear daylight that there is no human being that can be paralleled to him.

THE DEALINGS OF THE AMBIYA (ALAIHIMUS SALAAM) WITH THE MASSES

Notwithstanding this (i.e. their excellence in creation) the Ambiya (alaihimus salaam) still maintained their natural and humane qualities. They were opposed, troubled and underwent many types of difficulties, to such an extent that of them some were even martyred. History bears testimony to this fact that in every era the prophet of the time underwent such events. Although they also had followers, companions, people who accepted their message, and there are even instances of such followers who gave their lives and wealth for the Prophet. However, none of the prophets were saved from being put through trials and difficulties. At this juncture I would like to present another view supporting mine. In corroboration, hereunder is mentioned the words of Warqa bin Naufal, who was an Aalim of the

Tawrah and the Injeel, and he was the cousin of Ummul Mu`mineen Hadhrat Khadija-e-Kubra (radhiAllaahu anha). On the occasion when Wahi was first revealed upon Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) and he (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) was taken there by Hadhrat Khadija-e-Kubra (radhiAllaahu anha).

THE CONFIRMATION OF WARQA BIN NAUFAL

"Hadhrat Khatija (radhiAllaahu anha) said, oh my cousin listen to what your nephew (term of endearment) has to say ! Warqa asked Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) what he had seen. Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) narrated whatever had occurred. Upon hearing this Warqa said : 'This is that angel who also brought down Allaah Ta`ala's command to Hadhrat Moosa (alaihis salaam). If only I was a strong young man. I wish I could be alive at the time when your tribe expels you.' Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) asked in astonishment 'Will my tribesman expel me?' Warqa replied in the affirmative and said : 'Any person who comes with a message as you have (i.e. a prophet) then he is opposed. If I were to be alive when this happens to you then I will give you my full support." (Bukhari Shareef page 3, vol.1)

BLASPHEMING AND VILLIFYING A PROPHET

There are many such instances where there was severe opposition to the prophets. They were sworn at and villified. Similarly, was the case of Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) where he was verbally abused and this abuse still continues, but Insha-Allaah this animosity and abuse will not adversely affect this Deen or Shariah. However, those who villify the prophets, especially our Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) fall out of the fold of Islaam. They destroy their own Deen and dunya. They are counted amongst the Murtad (renegades). Even today there exists such people who regard it as their pride to swear at and villify the prophets, especially our Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam). Allaah Ta`ala save us from this.

A QUESTION

The following question arises that can the prophets, who are sent by Allaah Ta`ala and are perfect specimens of humankind, also be targets of ridicule and abuse ? And if such is the case with them which is the customary inherited occurrence (i.e. their villification etc.), then what will be the worldly and (Aakhirat) outcome of such persons who deal in this way with the prophets, considering that they (prophets) are free from sin and they are the chosen ones of Allaah Ta`ala. This verdict we will seek using Qur`aanic, Sunnat and logical proofs.

LOGICAL PROOF

Firstly, if we consider that such a person whose election was done by the Supreme Being. And HE gave his (prophets) training and education. And he was sent for the guidance of mankind. What logical reasoning can be deduced from this ? Together with this we will accompany it with substantiated evidence.

If any prophet was, Allaah Ta`ala forbid, a liar, immoral or unworthy. Then to attribute any of these terms to him would automatically be a reference to Allaah Ta`ala. That is, whatever abuse is levelled at a prophet will actually be tantamount to abusing Allaah Ta`ala. Naturally, since a prophet is sent and chosen by Allaah Ta`ala and HE has taught the prophet, then it follows that to swear the one is a direct reference to the other. If there was permission granted to say such vile things about the prophets, and the perpetrators of such acts were not punished, then what would be the outcome ? Evil would spread. Instead of guidance mischief would spread. There would not remain any respect for Deen and Shariah. Then man would do as he pleases in this world. There would be no one to stop a person from behaving as an animal. A person would say whatever he pleases about any prophet. For this reason we now have to reflect and see what Islaamic Shariah, which is the final Deen and Shariah and the preferred mazhab of Allaah Ta`ala, has to offer by way of proof, other than logical reasoning. What punishment has the Shariah specified for this? This is briefly presented hereunder.

PROOF FROM THE AHADITH

Prior to presenting any other proof it would only be appropriate that we firstly commence with a few narration's from the Ahadith whereby it becomes apparent that a person who swears at or villifies a prophet is worthy of execution and he is a kaafir and Murtad. In fact, the order of executing such a person stands to such an extent that even if he repents, then too the order of execution holds. That is to say the repentance of a person who villifies a prophet lies in his execution.

A NARRATION FROM ABU DAWOOD

We commence with a narration from Abu Dawood. The entire Hadith is as follows :

"Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (radhiAllaahu anhu) reports that a certain blind Sahabi had a female slave who used to verbally abuse Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam). The Sahabi used to prevent her but she continued. He even scolded and rebuked her but she did not heed t. One night as she was swearing Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) this blind Sahabi lifted his swordstick and pierced her stomach with it and she died. The next morning Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) was informed of her death and the people gathered. Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) asked who was responsible for her death and the blind Sahabi stood up,quivery. He sat in front of Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) and said 'Oh Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) this was my slave-girl, she used to swear you and I used to warn her against it, I even rebuked her but to no

avail. I even have two beautiful children from her and she was beloved to me. However last night as she was swearing at you I took my swordstick and killed her.' Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said : 'You should know, I bear witness that her blood is forgiven (i.e. there was no retribution for her killing)'". (Abu Dawood page 252, vol.2)

SECOND NARRATION

"Hadhrat Ali (radhiAllaahu anhu) reports that a certain Jewess used to verbally abuse Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) and a Sahabi fell upon her and strangled her to death. Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) made her killing also maaf (forgiven)."

Here one should not confuse the issue due to the woman being a Jewess. She was a zimmia (i.e. living in a Muslim land), and the Shar'i laws pertaining to Muslims especially with regard to Hadd and Qisas also applies to zimmis. Therefore her 'execution' due to her swearing Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) was applicable even though she may have been a Jewess or a Christian or even a Muslim.

THE VERDICT OF ALLAMA SHAUKANI

"Allama Shaukani (rahmatullahi alaih) has stated that the narration's of Hadhrat Ibn Abbas and Hadhrat Sha`bi (radhiAllaahu anhuma) are both proofs that the person who villifies Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) is worthy of execution. Ibn Munzir (rahmatullahi alaih) has stated that a person who openly and clearly swears at Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) must be compulsorily executed. This is a ruling whereupon there is consensus." (Bazlul Majhood page.125, vol. 5)

BLASPHEMATION OF A PROPHET IS ALSO KUFR

"The Ulama have reached a consensus of opinion that the person who verbally abuses Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) is guilty of slander and this is clear Kufr. Execution in this case is also imperative. To this extent that even if the person repents, then too the verdict of execution does not lapse away. Some Ulama have written that their repentance is not accepted." (Bazlul Majhood page.125, vol.5) This point is further elucidated hereunder.

THE VIEW OF ALLAMA KHATTABI

Hafiz Allama Khattabi (rahmatullahi alaih) has written that if the person is a Muslim then there is no doubt regarding his execution.

"Khattabi has mentioned that if the person who abuses the Prophet is a Muslim then there is no difference of opinion regarding the execution of that person. Hafiz Ibn Battaal (rahmatullahi alaih) has stated that if the abuser is a zimmi or Ahle Kitaab (Jew or Christian) then too he is worthy of execution. However if that person thereafter accepts Islaam then there is a difference of opinion regarding such a person. Allama Ibn Qasim (rahmatullahi alaih) states that the abuser of the Prophet should be executed unless he accepts Islaam, but if he is a Muslim then he is to be executed without seeking repentance from him." (Bazlul Majhood page.125, vol.5)

VERBAL ABUSE OF A PROPHET IS KUFR AND RENEGATION

As it had been mentioned earlier that to verbally abuse and villify a prophet falls in the category of defamation and this is not only clear Kufr, in fact a person is regarded as a renegade because of this. This is the view of the Kufi Ulama and Imaam Maalik (rahmatullahi alaih). There is a general consensus of opinion amongst the Ulama that execution is imperative for a renegade.

"The four Imaams (rahmatullahi alaihim) have reached a consensus that it is Waajib (compulsory) to execute a renegade. And his blood is forgiven. Similarly, execution for heresy is also compulsory." (Al Mazhab ala Mazahibil Arb`a page 423 , vol.5)

TO BELITTLE (A PROPHET) IS ALSO KUFR

"And that person is a Kaafir who believes that someone can become a prophet because of his own efforts and spiritual excellence. Because this type of belief negates the finality of prophet-hood of Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam). This indirect and implied villification of a prophet also necessitates Kufr. For example, if one sarcastically implies adultery and sorcery to a prophet then too one becomes a Kaafir. If a person mockingly ridicules or finds fault in a Nabi or angel, whether it is a physical flaw or one referring to his excellence or knowledge, or if he ridicules Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)'s character or Deen, then too he will become a Kaafir." (Ibid.)

This discussion proves that any type of ridicule or finding a deficiency in a prophet necessitates Kufr for the perpetrator. There is a consensus of opinion amongst the Ulama regarding this.

THE PERSON WHO RIDICULES THE SAHABAH (RADHIAllaahU ANHUM) IS A HERETIC

At this juncture we should consider the status of the Sahabah (radhiAllaahu anhum). It is accepted that their status is the highest after that of the Ambiya (alaihimus salaam). They received their training and spiritual excellence from the direct tutorship of Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam). Allaah Ta`ala and Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) have certified them. They were given the guarantee of Jannat and glad tidings. To villify them is also tantamount to heresy. To villify their teacher and chosen Rasul of Allaah Ta`ala is not much worse than villifying them.

Hafiz Ibn Hajr (rahmatullahi alaih) has mentioned in the preface of his kitaab 'Al Isaabatu fi Tameezis Sahaabati' :

"It is reported from the sanad (chain of narrators) of Hafiz Abi Zur`ata Razi that if you see any person who belittles or rebukes a Sahabi, then you should regard that person a heretic. Because Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam), the Qur`aan Shareef and whatever Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) had brought is all True. The Sahabah (radhiAllaahu anhum) were the witnesses to this. Hence, to rebuke them is to render useless their testification (regarding the Truth of the message of Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)). Therefore such people are counted from amongst the heretics." (page 10, vol.1)

THE PUNISHMENT FOR A HERETIC

There is a consensus of opinion that a heretic must be compulsorily executed, in fact Hadhrat Ali (radhiAllaahu anhu) also burnt such people to death.

"It is reported from Hadhrat Ikramah (radhiAllaahu anhu) that once some heretics were brought to Hadhrat Ali (radhiAllaahu anhu) and he gave the order to have them burnt. When this news reached Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (radhiAllaahu anhu) he said 'If it was I (who gave the order), I would not have ordered them to be burnt, because of Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)'s prohibition of not punishing using the punishment of Allaah Ta`ala. I would have rather ordered their execution..."
(Mishkaat page 307)
NOTE : Hadhrat Ali (radhiAllaahu anhu) ordered this as a preventive measure. A Muslim ruler has the right to administer such punishments in order to maintain law and order. (Mirqaat)

THIRD NARRATION – NARRATION OF MU`JAM TIBRANI

It is reported in Mu`jam Tibrani from Hadhrat Ali (radhiAllaahu anhu) that Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said that whoever verbally abuses a prophet is worthy of execution.

"Hadhrat Ali (radhiAllaahu anhu) reports that Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said : 'Whoever villifies a prophet should be executed, and whoever villifies my companions should be burnt."
(Majma`al Fawaaid page 220, vol.4 ; A`la Sunan page 252, vol.18)
This narration has through various chains reached the category of Hasan; hence it can be used as a dalee (proof).

Ibn Hazm has reported the statement of Imaam Maalik bin Anas (rahmatullahi alaih) :
"Maalik bin Anas (rahmatullahi alaih) has said that whoever swears at Hadhrat Abu Bakr or Umar (radhiAllaahu anhuma) should be lashed. The one who swears at Hadhrat Aisha (radhiAllaahu anha) should be executed. The reason given is that Allaah Ta`ala has severely warned against this in the Qur`aan Shareef, hence to slander the Ummul Mu`mineen (noble wives of Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)) is in actual fact opposing the Qur`aan Shareef. And whosoever opposes the Qur`aan Shareef is liable to be executed. Ibn Hazm Zaahiri (rahmatullah alaih) states that Imaam Maalik (rahmatullahi alaih)'s statement is completely correct, because such a person is a thorough Murtad (renegade). Therefore what is your opinion regarding that person who villifies Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) ? Since the Noble wives of Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) were pure and chaste owing to Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) himself, and to villify them is not like villifying an ordinary person. That person who does not hold beloved and in high esteem Allaah Ta`ala and Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) cannot be a Mumin. Therefore the one who villifies Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) is totally excluded from bearing any sign of Imaan.

THE STATEMENT OF IMAAM AHMED

"Hadhrat Ahmed (rahmatullahi alaih) has stated that the person who villifies Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) is to be undoubtedly executed. And if he swears and slanders then he is a perfect Murtad, and the punishment for a Murtad is also execution by sword."

FOURTH NARRATION – THE DECREE OF HADHRAT ABU BAKR (RADHIAllaahU ANHU)

Ibn Hazm (rahmatullahi alaih) has reported another narration with an authentic chain.

"Abdullah bin Qudama has reported the following from Hadhrat Abu Burda (radhiAllaahu anhu) that once a person was speaking ill of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (radhiAllaahu anhu). Upon hearing this I asked : 'Should I not kill him ?' Hadhrat Abu Bakr (radhiAllaahu anhu) replied : 'No! Execution is only for that person who villifies Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)"

The Sanad here is authentic. Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz (rahmatullahi alaih) has stated that execution is only for the person who villifies Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam), not for the villification of others.

THE RULING OF THE FOUR IMAAMS

"Imaams Abu Hanifah, Maalik, Ahmed and Shaafi (rahmatullahi alaihim) and all Muhadditheen and Aimma have reached this verdict that such a person (who villifies Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)) is a Kaafir and a Murtad." (A`la Sunan page.253, vol.18)

THE EXECUTION OF KAAB BIN ASHRAF

This is a famous incident which is reported in Bukhari Shareef. Kaab bin Ashraf was a Jew and a poet. He used to villify, insult and mock at Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) through his poetry. He used to say such vile things that no ordinary person would say. Allama Aini (rahmatullahi alaih) mentions in his commentary of Bukhari Shareef :

"The execution of Kaab bin Ashraf was for this reason that he villified Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) and the Muslims through his poetry. And he used to incite the Kuffaar against the Muslims."
(Bukhari page 131, vol.2)

EXECUTION IS THE ORDER OF Rasullullaah (SALLAllaahU ALAIHI WASALLAM)

An interesting point to note is that Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) himself ordered the execution.

"Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) asked the Sahabah if there was any amongst them who was prepared to assassinate Kaab bin Ashraf, because he had caused untold harm and misery to Allaah and his Rasul. Muhammad bin Salma (radhiAllaahu anhu) stood up and asked : 'Oh Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) should I execute him ? ' Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) replied in the affirmative." (Bukhari page 576, vol.2)

THE EXECUTION OF ABU RAFI

Just like the episode of Kaab bin Ashraf, the execution of Abu Rafi is also reported. Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) sent a group of Sahabahs to execute him. Regarding him also it was the same that he caused great harm in different ways to Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam). He also used to incite the Mushrikeen against the Muslims and he also assisted the Mushrikeen financially.

"Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) sent Hadhrat Abdullah bin Ateek, a Sahabi from amongst the Ansaar as a leader (of a group), to assassinate Abu Rafi the Jew. Abu Rafi used to cause great difficulty to Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) and he used to speak ill about Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam).

THE CONQUEST OF MAKKAH AND THE EXECUTION OF IBN KHATAL

On the occasion of the conquest of Makkah, Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) forgave many of the great enemies of Islaam and he made an announcement of a general amnesty. However there were a few exceptions to this amnesty and they were executed. Amongst them was Ibn Khatal and his female slave. These were amongst those who blasphemed Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam). (Asahhus Siyar page 226)

CONCLUDING NOTES

Similar to these episodes there are others which confirm that the person who swears at, blasphemes, villifies, causes any physical or spiritual difficulty upon Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam), and those who assist in the same, or speak ill of or slander Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) do not only fall in the category of Kufr, but the Ulama have included such persons as amongst the Murtads and heretics. And their repentance is also not accepted. Their execution is compulsory. Upon this is a consensus amongst the Aimma and Jamhoor (the Majaults) Ulama that the person who blasphemes Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) should compulsorily be executed and he becomes a Kaafir and Murtad.

May Allaah Ta`ala save all the Muslims from such a great sin. We Seek HIS protection. Aameen.

SUMMARY

1. A Nabi is a chosen and Divinely instructed servant of Allaah Ta`ala
2. A Nabi is free from sin
3. To disgrace a prophet in any way, be it physically or spiritually, by word or action is all Kufr.
4. There is a consensus of opinion that those who villify and blaspheme a prophet become Kaafir and Murtad.
5. The villifier of a prophet is to compulsorily executed.
6. The order of execution does not fall away even after repentance.
7. All the four Imaams agree on the execution of the one who blasphemes a prophet.
8. The blasphemer of the Prophet is also a heretic
9. There is Ijmaa of all Ulama that the blasphemer be executed.
10. The repentance of a blasphemer is not accepted.
11. There is no difference of opinion amongst the Ulama regarding the execution of a blasphemer.
12. Rasullullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) had himself ordered the execution of people who disgraced and spoke ill of Allaah Ta`ala's Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)

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Comment [COMMENT1]: 1. .The guidance for the creation to attain accomplishment in deeds is shown by Allaah Ta`ala.